

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Cancel claims ~~14~~ and ~~15~~ without prejudice.

Rewrite claims 1, 8, 18 and 22 and add new claim 30 as follows:

1. (Amended Three Times) A method for reducing the tendency of paper to curl in a drying section of a paper machine, comprising
- drying a paper web having opposed bottom and top sides by pressing the bottom side of the web against heated faces of a plurality of drying cylinders in the drying section of a paper machine,
- after the bottom side of the web separates from the heated face of a drying cylinder, raising the temperature of the bottom side of the web by applying a sufficient amount of steam onto the bottom side of the web to control the moisture gradient in the thickness direction of the paper web between the paper web sides in a steam treatment onto the entire width of the paper web in the drying section such that tensions that have been formed or that tend to be formed in the fiber mesh are relaxed by means of heat and moisture from the steam in the area of their formation or thereafter,
- [applying] said steam treatment being applied to an open face of the bottom side of the paper web as it runs on a wire in a suction sector of a suction roll or cylinder in said drying section and in an area of said drying section where the dry solids content of the paper web is from about 70 to about 98 percent, and

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promoting the penetration of said steam treatment into the paper web in a direction of the thickness of the paper web by means of suction present on said suction sector, to thereby control curling of the web.

8. (Amended Three Times) A drying section of a paper machine, comprising at least one drying section group comprising a plurality of drying cylinders for drying a paper web, said drying cylinders each having a heated surface, a drying wire running in a meandering fashion over said drying cylinders, said drying wire pressing the paper web against said heated surfaces of said drying cylinders,

at least one steam box arranged in said drying group and comprising a counter-face which, together with a free face of the paper web, defines a contact-free steam-treatment gap in said drying group, said steam box extending substantially across an entire transverse width of the paper web,

said steam box applying steam substantially across an entire width of the paper web such that [steam] tensions that have been formed or that tend to be formed in the fiber mesh of the paper web are relaxed by means of heat and moisture in the area of their formation or substantially immediately thereafter, and said steam box applying steam to the paper web during the run of the paper web on a wire through the drying section constituting means for controlling the moisture gradient in the thickness direction of the paper web between the paper web surfaces such that a moisture profile in a

direction of thickness of the paper web is controlled and the tendency of the paper web to curl is prevented in the run of the paper web through the drying section.

18. (Twice Amended) A method for reducing the tendency of paper to curl in a drying section of a paper machine, comprising

drying a paper web having opposed top and bottom sides by pressing the bottom side of the web against heated faces of a plurality of drying cylinders in the drying section of a paper machine,

applying a sufficient amount of steam onto the bottom side of the web to control the moisture gradient in the thickness direction of the paper web between the paper web sides in a steam treatment onto the entire width of the paper web in the drying section such that tensions that have been formed or that tend to be formed in the fiber mesh are relaxed by means of heat and moisture from the steam in the area of their formation or thereafter,

arranging said drying cylinders in an upper row and a lower row,

arranging suction rolls or cylinders in gaps between said drying cylinders in said upper row and said lower row,

applying said steam treatment to a free draw of the paper web located between said upper row and said lower row of said drying cylinders, and

applying steam onto at least one side of the paper web, to thereby control curling of the web.

24 22. (Twice Amended) A method for reducing the tendency of paper to curl in a drying section of a paper machine, comprising

C4 drying a paper web having opposed top and bottom sides by pressing the bottom side of the web against heated faces of a plurality of drying cylinders in the drying section of a paper machine,

after the bottom side of the web separates from the heated face of a drying cylinder, raising the temperature of the bottom side of the web by applying a sufficient amount of steam onto the bottom side of the web to control the moisture gradient in the thickness direction of the paper web between the paper web sides in a steam treatment onto the entire width of the paper web in the drying section such that tensions that have been formed or that tend to be formed in the fiber mesh are relaxed by means of heat and moisture from the steam in the area of their formation or thereafter,

[applying] said steam treatment being applied to an open face of the bottom side of the paper web as it runs on a wire in a suction sector of a suction roll or cylinder located at an end of said drying section, and

promoting the penetration of said steam treatment into the paper web in a direction of the thickness of the paper web by means of suction present on said suction sector, to thereby control curling of the web.

15 25 30. A method for reducing the tendency of paper to curl in a drying section of a paper machine, comprising

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drying a paper web having opposed top and bottom sides by pressing the bottom side of the web against heated faces of a plurality of drying cylinders in the drying section of a paper machine,

after the bottom side of the web separates from the heated face of a drying cylinder and the temperature of the bottom side decreases to a temperature below the temperature of the top side of the web, raising the temperature of the bottom side of the web to a temperature above the temperature of the top side of the web by applying steam onto the bottom side of the web to thereby control the moisture gradient in the thickness direction of the paper web between the paper web sides such that tensions that have been formed or that tend to be formed in the fiber mesh are relaxed by means of heat and moisture from the steam in the area of their formation or thereafter, and

said steam treatment being applied to an open face of the bottom side of the paper web as it runs on a wire in said drying section.

#### **REMARKS:**

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended is respectfully requested.

Claims 14 and 15 having been cancelled, the claims presently active in this application include claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8-13, 16-29 and new claim 30.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8-13, 16, 17, 22-24 and 27 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Wedel in view of Wywailowski et al. Claims 25 and 26 stand rejected